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Agenda item 7 (e)
Coordination, programme and other questions: international cooperation in the field of informatics

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, H.E. Mr. Ivan Simonović (Croatia) on the basis of informal consultations

The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the interest of Member States in taking full advantage of information and communications technologies for the acceleration of economic and social development,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the need to harmonize and improve United Nations information systems for optimal utilization and access by all States, with due regard to all official languages,

Stressing the need to ensure complementarities between the mandates of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics and of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force,

Welcoming the report presented by the Chairman of the Working Group on the progress achieved so far in fulfilling the Working Group's mandate,[1]

[1] See E/2001/96.

1. *Reiterates* once again the high priority that it attaches to easy, economical, uncomplicated and unhindered access for States Members and observers of the United Nations, as well as non-governmental organizations accredited to the United Nations, to the computerized databases and information systems and services of the United Nations, provided that the unhindered access of non-governmental organizations shall not prejudice the access of Member States and that it shall not impose an additional financial burden for the use of databases and other systems;

2. *Requests* the President of the Economic and Social Council to convene the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics for one more year to enable it to carry out, from within existing resources, its work of facilitating the successful implementation of the initiatives being taken by the Secretary-General with regard to the use of information technology and of continuing the implementation of measures required to achieve its objectives. In this regard, the Working Group is requested to continue:

(a) To improve electronic connectivity via the Internet for all Member States in their capitals and at major United Nations locations, *inter alia*, through the enhanced connectivity of permanent missions to the Internet and the United Nations databases;

(b) To improve the access of Member States to a wider database of United Nations information on economic and social, development and political issues and other substantive programming areas, and to have all official documents available via the Internet;

(c) To improve electronic links among Member States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies;

(d) To provide training for the staff of permanent missions to enable them to take full advantage of the facilities being developed for Member States;

(e) To enhance the capacity of Member States to access United Nations data on-line, using low-cost telecommunications links or providing other modalities, such as CD-ROM, whereby Member States can have access to specialized databases not available on the Internet;

(f) To make arrangements, as appropriate, to provide permanent missions of developing countries with hardware platforms to utilize Internet technology;

(g) To use video-conferencing on a more frequent basis, as appropriate, to further communication and interaction within the United Nations system and between the United Nations, permanent missions and academic institutions;

(h) To intensify contacts with the private sector so as to bring the latter's wealth of experience contribute positively to the work of the Working Group;

(i) To make greater use of projector/screen units for negotiations;

(j) To establish a password-protected system of mailing lists and bulletin boards on the United Nations Web site to facilitate the dissemination of information among the United Nations missions;

(k) To explore ways to fully use the potential of information and communication technologies in order to speed up translation processes;

3. *Supports* the efforts of the Working Group to keep intact the network of national focal points that was established in connection with the year 2000 problem as a vehicle for the diffusion of best practices and lessons learned, in particular for the exchange of information on locally and regionally appropriate solutions and, in this regard, appeals once again to countries and other sources to provide the extrabudgetary resources necessary to maintain the mailing list of the national focal points;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to extend full cooperation to the Working Group and to give priority to implementing its recommendations;

5. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council at its substantive session of 2002 on the action taken to follow up the present resolution, including the findings of the Working Group.